IX.   Instructions for Application Submission via Grants.gov

Register early and submit early. In order to submit an application through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov), an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between three to five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. To avoid delays, EDA strongly recommends that applicants start early and not wait until an approaching funding deadline date before logging in, registering, reviewing the application instructions, and applying. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html   Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their registration for System for Award Management (SAM), which includes the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

AOR requirement. Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) for your organization. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications at Grants.gov so please ensure that your organization's application is submitted by an AOR. If the application is submitted by anyone other than your organization's AOR, it will be rejected by the Grants.gov system and cannot be considered by EDA. Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

EDA will not accept late submissions caused by Grants.gov registration issues, including CCR and AOR issues.

Once an applicant is registered, the following list provides step-by-step instructions for accessing, completing and submitting an application via Grants.gov. Please also read the instructions posted at Grants.gov.

a)   Ensure that you have installed a compatible version of Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer, as incompatible versions of Adobe Acrobat Reader may cause errors. See http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/troubleshooting/verifying-adobe-reader.html.Navigate to www.grants.gov and select "Apply for Grants" from the left-hand menu.

b)   Select the link for "Download a Grant Application" package.

c)   Enter Funding Opportunity Number "EDAP2015" and click on "Download Package."

d)   Click on the "download" link under "Instructions and Application" for the instructions and application specific to the type of project and EDA program (Public Works or Economic Adjustment Assistance) under which you are applying.

e)   A new window should pop up. In the new window, click on "Download

Application Instructions" to review the instructions posted on Grants.gov and "Download Application Package" when you are ready to begin the application.

f)   Save the applicable application package to your computer or network drive. Note that the package file can be shared among multiple users; however, each user must have a compatible version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed in order to save changes to the application package.

g)   Click on each of the documents in the "Mandatory Documents" box and, after selecting each one, click on the arrow to move these into the "Mandatory Documents for Submission" box.

h)   In the "Optional Documents" box, click on Form SF-LLL if non-Federal funds have been or are planned to be used for lobbying in connection with this competitive solicitation and then move this to the "Optional Documents for Submission" box. If you will be submitting your application via Grants.gov, also click on "Attachments" and move this to the "Optional Documents for Submission" box. The Attachments form allows applicants to attach any documents required as attachments under this competitive solicitation, such as a CEDS or letters of support.

i)   The application package should pre-populate with all selected forms embedded. Complete all mandatory fields (highlighted in yellow) on the forms. Note that mandatory fields will vary based on the type of applicant and the type of assistance sought. On Form CD-511, type "not awarded yet" in the "project number" field. Save the application package at regular intervals to avoid losing work.

j)   Attach any required attachments. The preferred file format for attachments is portable document format (PDF); however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Excel formats. ·

k)   When all mandatory fields have been completed, scroll to the top and click on "Check Package for Errors".

l)   Click "Save".

m)   Click "Save and Submit". At this point the applicant's AOR must be connected to the Internet and will be asked to enter their Grants.gov user id and password in order to submit via Grants.gov. As noted above, an AOR must submit the application for it to be validated by Grants.gov and received by EDA.

Field limitations and special characters. Please be advised that Grants.gov provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters:

Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my application package?

Please limit file names to 50 characters and do not use special characters (example: &,-,*,%,/,#) in attachment names and application form fields (including periods (.), blank spaces and accent

marks) or attaching documents with the same name. An underscore (example: my_Attached_File.pdf) may be used to separate a file name. Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application may be rejected.

What kind of information can be entered into form fields within my application?

Grants.gov application packages offer fields to enter a set amount of data. When the limit is reached for a certain field, you will no longer be able to enter data into that field. For every form, there are different limitations to the data that you are allowed to enter (this varies between agency and form). Refer to the agency instructions available for download with the application package for more detail.

Do not use special characters (example: &,-,*,%,/,#) within the application form fields including periods (.), blank spaces and accent marks; an underscore may be used. Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application may be rejected.

In EDA's experience, use of apostrophes (') in file names and fillable fields of required forms has resulted in application submission issues. Accordingly, please periodically check the status of your application to make sure it has been validated, and use file naming conventions that do not negatively affect your application submission.

If a response exceeds the field limit requirements of any form, including Form ED-900, the applicant is advised to include the response as an attachment to the application. The applicant should move 'Attachments' to the 'Optional Documents for Submission' box in the application package, and clearly indicate in the form field that the information is included as an electronic file.

Verify submission was successful. Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission.

An applicant should expect to receive two initial emails from Grants.gov: the first will confirm receipt of the application, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to EDA or has been rejected due to errors. Because it can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an error, applicants should time their submissions to allow for application correction and resubmission by the applicable funding deadline. Applicants will receive a third email once EDA has retrieved their applications.

EDA requests that applicants kindly refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application package. Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the Grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted an application, and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that EDA has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may

contact the applicable regional office representative listed in section VIII. of this announcement to inquire if EDA is in receipt of the applicant's submission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was timely received and validated successfully at Grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, log on to Grants.gov and click on the "Track My Application" link from the left-hand menu. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by Grants.gov, and an agency tracking number assigned. If the date and time your application is validated and time-stamped by Grants.gov is later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the applicable funding deadline, your application is late. If your application has a status of "Received" it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs/grant-application-faqs.html. For more detailed information on why an application may be rejected, please see "Troubleshooting Tips" at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/troubleshooting.html.

Grants.gov systems issues. If you experience a Grants.gov "systems issue" (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before an applicable funding deadline, please (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered "systems issues." Similarly, an applicant's failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are not considered systems issues. A Grants.gov "systems issue" is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed "systems issue," EDA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format. Regardless of whether there is a confirmed "systems issue," all applications must be received by EDA by the stated deadlines.

Applicants should access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html The following link lists frequently asked questions (FAQs): http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/general-support/faqs.html. If you do not find an answer to your question under the "Applicant FAQs," try consulting the "Applicant User Guide" or contacting Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.